



Spotlight on Terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

(July 19-25, 2023)

Overview

- ▶ This past week Palestinians carried out five terrorist attacks: two shooting attacks (in Har Gerizim in Nablus and in Hawwara); two stabbing attacks (in Jerusalem and at the Gilboa crossing); and a vehicular ramming attack near Sebastia (northwest of Nablus). A stabbing attack was prevented near Kiryat Arba when a Palestinian with a knife was detained. IDF forces continued counterterrorism activities, focusing mainly on the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm, where IEDs ready for detonation were seized. Two Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli security forces.
- ▶ In preparation for Tisha b'Av,¹ Hamas called on the Palestinian public to "resist" the plan of Jewish worshipers to enter the Temple Mount compound "to desecrate al-Aqsa Mosque," and threatened Israel with the Palestinians' rage.
- ▶ The Gaza Strip remains relatively quiet. The Palestinians terrorist organizations continued improving their rocket capabilities with a well-publicized launch of experimental rockets towards the sea. The monthly grant from Qatar was distributed to one hundred thousand needy Gazan families.
- ▶ Preparations continued for the meeting of the leadership of the Palestinian organizations expected in Cairo at the end of July 2023. Hamas announced its representatives would attend the meeting, however, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) said its representatives would attend only if the detentions [of its operatives] in the Palestinian Authority (PA) territories stopped and all detainees were released.
- ▶ On July 24, 2023, Mahmoud Abbas arrived in Turkey for an official visit, heading a delegation of senior PA officials, for meetings with the Turkish and other government officials. The PA continues demonstrations of governance with visits of leadership figures to the various districts and the ongoing detentions. PA lawfare continues, and the PA foreign minister

¹ Tisha b'Av (The Ninth of Av) is a day of fasting that commemorates various tragedies that befell the Jewish people, particularly the destruction of the two Temples in 586 BCE and 70 CE.

submitted a written statement to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) claiming "evidence of Israel's illegal measures" against the Palestinians. The International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC) has launched a website for Palestinians to file complaints against Israelis who allegedly carried out "war crimes."

Judea and Samaria

Shooting in Har Gerizim in Nablus

► On the morning of July 25, 2023, a vehicle carrying three armed Palestinians arrived at the entrance to Har Gerizim in Nablus. Two of them exited the vehicle and shot at the IDF force securing the location. The force returned fire and all three were killed. Three M-16 rifles, ammunition magazines, a handgun and a vest were found in their possession. The IDF confiscated their vehicle and removed the bodies (IDF Twitter account and the Israeli media, July 25, 2023).



Right: The weapons found in the possession of the Palestinians (IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 25, 2023). Left: Removing the terrorists' vehicle (Shehab Twitter account, July 24, 2023).

- The ministry of health in Ramallah reported their deaths:
- **Sa'ad Maher al-Kharaz, 43 years old** (Wafa, July 25, 2023). He was the son of Sheikh Maher al-Kharaz, a senior Hamas operative in Nablus. Sa'ad al-Kharaz was a released prisoner who chaired the general meeting of the al-Najah University students council on behalf of the Hamas-affiliated Islamic Bloc during the 2005-2006 school year (Shehab, July 25, 2023).
- **Nur al-Din Taysir al-'Ardha, 32 years old.**
- **Muntaser Bahajat Ali Salameh, 33 years old.**
- Hamas issued a mourning notice for them, claiming them as operatives of the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, the organization's military-terrorist wing (Hamas website, July 25, 2023).



The mourning notice issued by Hamas for (left to right) Nur al-Din al-'Ardha, Sa'ad al-Kharaz and Muntaser Salameh ("West Bank Lions" Telegram channel, July 25, 2023).

► **Nabil Abu Rudeineh, spokesman for Mahmoud Abbas**, called the "Israeli occupation's" killing "of three young men" in Har Gerizim a "war crime" and the continuation of Israel's policy of the collective punishment of Palestinians. He claimed the ongoing daily killings, the "invasion" of Palestinian cities, acts of aggression against the holy Islamic and Christian sites, along with the settlements and "other Israeli crimes," would not overcome them or bring security and stability, because the only way to achieve peace and security was to grant the Palestinians their legitimate rights. He called for immediate American intervention (Wafa, July 25, 2023).

► **Hamas spokesman Abd al-Latif al-Qanua** claimed the "new crime" of killing "a group of resistance heroes" in Nablus was another in the series of crimes committed by the Israeli government through its increasing aggression against the Palestinians. He claimed killing them would not stop the spread of the "resistance" [anti-Israeli terrorism], which could be neither broken nor eradicated (Safa, July 25, 2023).

Shooting in Hawwara

► On the evening of July 24, 2023, shots were fired at an Israeli civilian bus near Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the bus was damaged. IDF forces instituted a search to locate the shooters (IDF Twitter account, July 24, 2023).



Bullet holes in the bus attacked near Hawwara (Shomron Regional Council Security, July 25, 2023).

Attempted stabbing at the Gilboa Crossing

► On July 22, 2023, a Palestinian went to the Gilboa Crossing and holding a knife, ran towards the security guards, who shot at him. He threw the knife on the ground and the guards overcame him. No casualties were reported (Ministry of Defense Facebook page, July 22, 2023). The Palestinian was **Abdullah Muhammad Manor** from the village of Arana (northeast of Jenin) (Wafa, July 22, 2023).



The knife held by the Palestinian terrorist (Israeli defense ministry Facebook page, July 22, 2023).

Vehicular attack near Sebastia

► On the evening of July 21, 2023, a vehicle carrying two Palestinians approached an IDF force operating near Kfar Sebastia (northwest of Nablus). The soldiers signaled the vehicle to stop but it accelerated and continued driving towards them. The soldiers shot at it, killing the driver; the passenger was wounded and detained. No Israeli casualties were reported (IDF spokesman and the Israeli media, July 21, 22, 2023).

► The Palestinian media reported the death of **Fawzi Hani Mukhalfeh, 18 years old**, from Sebastia; **Muhammad Omar Mukheimer**, also from Sebastia, was wounded (Wafa, July 21,

2023). Mukhalfeh was a Fatah operative (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 22, 2023) and a military funeral was held for him (Wafa, July 22, 2023).



Right: Mourning notice issued by Fatah in Sebastia (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 22, 2023. Left: The military funeral held for Mukhalfeh (PA general security forces, July 22, 2023).

► **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh** paid a condolence call to the Mukhalfeh family in Sebastia. He said Fawzi Mukhalfeh would not be the last Palestinian killed and that throughout the years the Palestinians had paid a price for confronting "the occupation's killing and terrorism machine" (Wafa, July 22, 2023).



Muhammad Shtayyeh pays a condolence call in Sebastia (Wafa, July 22, 2023).

► **The PA foreign ministry** demanded an international investigation of the "crime of Mukhalfeh's execution" and the prosecution of the "criminals" and those behind them (Wafa, July 22, 2023).

► **Hamas** claimed the "criminal executions" would not frighten the Palestinians or bring "the occupation" security, because the Palestinians would continue their "resistance" [terrorism]. Hamas called on the Palestinians to block the settlers' roads, escalate the "resistance" and clash with Israel by any and all means (Hamas website, July 22, 2023).

► The **PIJ in Judea and Samaria** condemned the "crime of cold-blooded execution" and claimed that continuing the crimes would not extinguish "the burning flame of the resistance" but would only fuel it (PIJ website, July 22, 2023).

Stabbing in Jerusalem

► On July 20, 2023, three Palestinians attacked an Israeli civilian in the Gilo neighborhood of Jerusalem, stabbing his upper torso about twenty times and then fleeing the scene. He was critically injured and evacuated to a hospital. Two knives were found at the scene of the incident. The three were later apprehended in the village of Harmala (south of Bethlehem). After interrogating the three Palestinians, the Israeli Security Agency confirmed it was a terrorist attack. One of them had been detained near Jerusalem several years ago while in possession of a knife, and admitted he planned to carry out a stabbing attack; he was sentenced to four months in prison (Israeli media, July 20, 22, 2022).



Right: The scene of the stabbing in Jerusalem (Magen David Adom, July 20, 2023). Left: The knife used in the attack (Israel Police Force spokesman's unit, July 22, 2023).

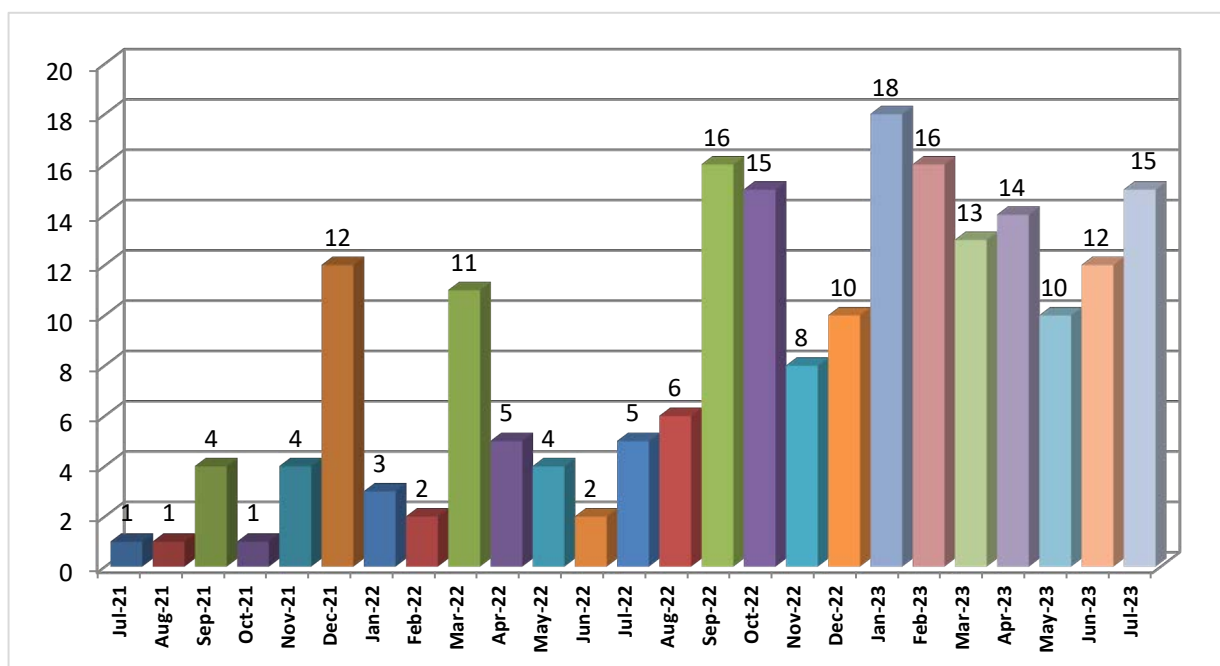
Stabbing in Kiryat Arba prevented

► On the morning of July 20, 2023, IDF forces detained a suspicious Palestinian who was en route to the settlement of Kiryat Arba, the home of Itamar Ben-Gvir, Israel's minister of national security. A knife was found in backpack and he admitted he was planning to carry out an attack (IDF spokesman and the Israeli media, July 20, 2023).



The knife found in the Palestinian's backpack (IDF Twitter account, July 20 2023).

Critical Terrorist Attacks in Judea and Samaria since November 2020²



Counterterrorism Activities

► This past week the Israeli security forces continued intensive counterterrorism activities in Judea and Samaria, focusing on Tulkarm, Nablus and Jericho, detaining Palestinians suspected of involvement in terrorism and confiscating large quantities of weapons:

The Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm

► On July 24, 2023, during an IDF activity in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp in Tulkarm, the forces detained a wanted Palestinian and carried out searches to locate explosives laboratories and stockpiles. The forces were attacked with several IEDs and an explosive

² A critical attack is defined by the ITIC as involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.

wreath was located partially buried under the road.³ The IDF used bulldozers to locate and remove the explosives (Israeli media and the IDF spokesman's Twitter account, July 24, 2023).

► The Palestinians reported that sixty military vehicles entered and completely blockaded the refugee camp, and IDF forces ripped up the roads in the camp [removing asphalt to locate IEDs]. It was also reported that four Palestinians were injured during clashes with IDF forces and nine more were injured by shrapnel. The forces detained Mu'man Karawi, the son of senior Hamas operative Fathi Karawi (Ma'an, July 24, 2023).

► **Abd al-Rahman Shadeed**, a senior Hamas figure, claimed that the IDF's activity in the Nur al-Shams refugee camp was a failed attempt to "extinguish the fire of the resistance." **Fathi Karawi, a senior Hamas figure** whose son was detained, claimed that the "resistance" had "struck roots" in the refugee camp (Shehab Twitter account, July 24, 2023).



Right: IDF forces enter the Nur al-Shams refugee camp (QudsN Twitter account, July 24, 2023). Left: One of the roads in the refugee camp after the IDF removed the asphalt to locate IEDs (Wafa, July 24, 2023).

Palestinian killed in Umm Safa

► July 21, 2023, Palestinians rioted in the village of Umm Safa (northwest of Ramallah). Palestinians threw rocks at Israeli security forces, who shot at the rioters, hitting one of them (Israeli media, July 21, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Muhammad Fuad Atta al-Bayidh, 17 years old**, from the Jilazoun refugee camp (north of Ramallah). His mother said Muhammad's father died when he was two years old and that her son, like the other residents of Umm Safa, had participated in a "quiet demonstration" to defend land that settlers wanted to appropriate. She said he participated in demonstrations every week (Wafa, July 21, 2023). Fatah's media information and cultural commission issued a mourning notice for him,

³ Burying IEDs under paved roads was a system also used to attack Israeli security forces during the most recent IDF activity in Jenin.

claiming him as a Fatah activist (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 21, 2023). A military funeral was held for him, attended by Laila Ghannam, Ramallah and al-Bireh district governor (Wafa, July 22, 2023).



Right: Muhammad al-Bayidh (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 21, 2023). Left: The military funeral held for Muhammad al-Bayidh (Laila Ghannam's Facebook page, July 22, 2023).

- ▶ Laila Ghannam called what happened in Umm Safa the "premeditated assassination" of a 17-year-old boy, which raised questions regarding international law and the role of human rights institutions which are content to [only] denounce "Israel's crimes" and offer condolences to the victims' families. She claimed the "crimes" were committed by an extremist system which gave the settlers and soldiers a green light to attack anything Palestinian. The army, she claimed, was supposed to operate according to rules of engagement, but had come intending to kill. She said continued international silence would allow the "crimes of the occupation" to continue, obligating the Palestinian [terrorist] organizations to close ranks and return to national unity (Wafa, July 21, 2023; Laila Ghannam's Facebook page, July 22, 2023).
- ▶ Fatah's media information and cultural commission said the Palestinians would confront "occupation terrorism," and the settler militias and attacks against Palestinian villages and cities would be met with resistance and confrontation. Its statement added that attempts to establish an outpost in Umm Safa would fail thanks to the firm stance of the villagers and their defense of the Palestinian presence (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 21, 2023).
- ▶ **Hamas** said "the occupation's escalating crimes" in occupied Palestinian land will not extinguish the "revolution" but merely "fuel its fire," and Israel was delusional if it thought "crimes" would bring it security or peace (Hamas website, July 21, 2023).
- ▶ The **PIJ in Judea and Samaria** claimed "the occupation's barbaric crimes" against "innocent civilians" would not diminish the Palestinians' determination or the heroism of the

"resistance" fighters [terrorist operatives], who would continue on the path to freedom (PIJ website, July 22, 2023).

Palestinian killed in a clash near the Tomb of Joseph

► On the night of July 19, 2023, hundreds of Israeli worshipers secured by IDF soldiers entered the Tomb of Joseph in Nablus to pray. Palestinians rioted, burning tires, throwing rocks and IEDs and shooting at the forces, who responded with riot control measures and live fire (the IDF's Twitter account, July 20, 2023).

► The Jerusalem Brigades' Nablus Battalion claimed its operatives, along with operatives from the Balata and Askar refugee camps, clashed with IDF forces and detonated IEDs to attack IDF armored vehicles. The Nablus Battalion announced that it had used a new IED called the Nabulsi 1, which "had proved its effectiveness" (Nablus Battalion Telegram channel, July 20, 2023).



Right: IED explodes during the riot (Shehab Telegram channel, July 19, 2023), Left: Nabulsi 1 IEDs (Nablus Battalion Telegram channel, July 20, 2023).

► The ministry of health in Ramallah reported the death of **Badr Sami Rubhi al-Masri, 19 years old**, and the wounding of three Palestinians, two of them seriously (Wafa, July 20, 2023). Fatah issued a mourning notice claiming al-Masri as one of its operatives (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 20, 2023), and a military funeral was held for him (Wafa, July 20, 2023).



Right: Badr al-Masri (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 20, 2023). Left: The military funeral held for Badr al-Masri (PA security forces' Telegram channel, July 20, 2023).

► **Rawhi Fatouh, chairman of the Palestinian National Council**, condemned the "execution" of Badr al-Masri, calling it a "heinous crime reflecting the aggressive, fascist behavior and criminal behavior of [Israel's] right-wing government." He claimed that the "crimes of the fascist occupation" would be met with continued firm "resistance," and threatened Israel would pay for its "crimes." He called on the international community to take practical steps by imposing sanctions and boycotting Israel (Wafa, July 20, 2023). **Fatah's media information and cultural commission** also called on the international community for immediate intervention (Fatah's media information and cultural commission Facebook page, July 20, 2023).

► **Hamas** claimed "the criminal occupation" would pay for every drop of blood spilled on "pure Palestinian land," and the Palestinians would not retreat from the line of "self-defense" or defending every inch of their land and their holy places (Hamas website, July 20, 2023).

Hamas calls for "resistance" in al-Aqsa Mosque

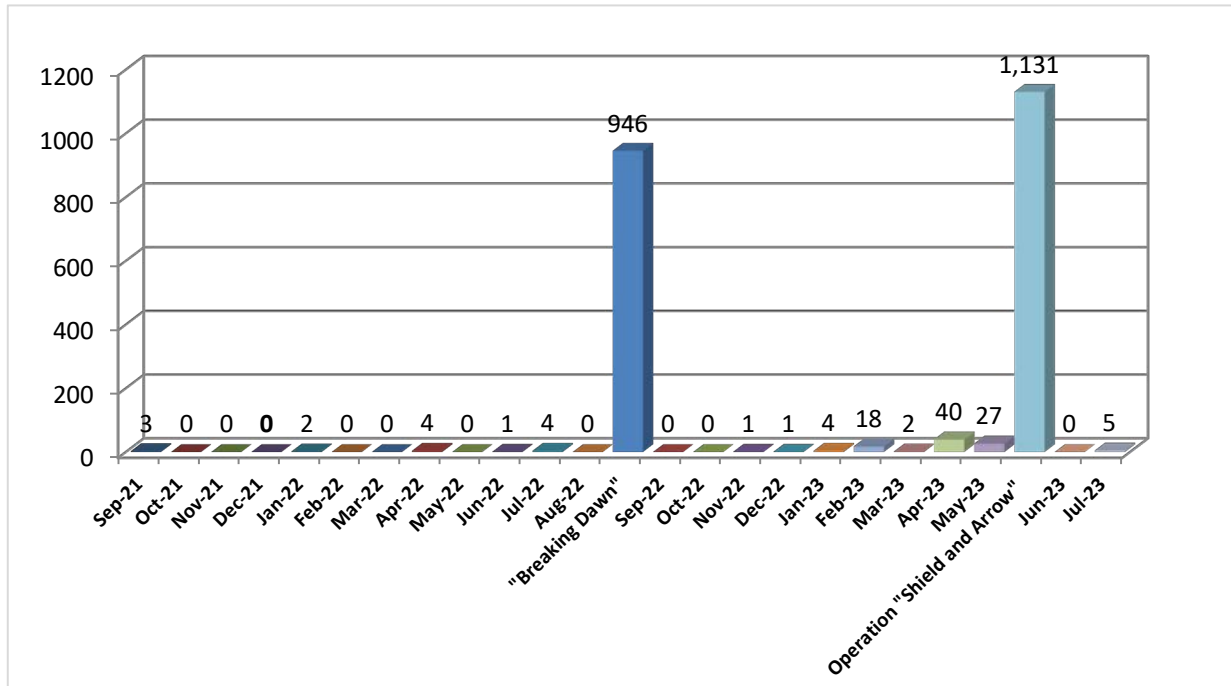
► Tisha b'Av begins on the evening of Wednesday, July 26, 2023. It is a day when many Jews pray at the Western Wall and some pray in the Temple Mount compound. **Muhammad Hamada, Hamas spokesman for Jerusalem affairs**, called on the Palestinian public to clash with the worshipers, threatening Israel with the wrath of the Palestinian people, for whom the Temple Mount is a holy place (Hamas Telegram account, July 23, 2023).

Israel's South

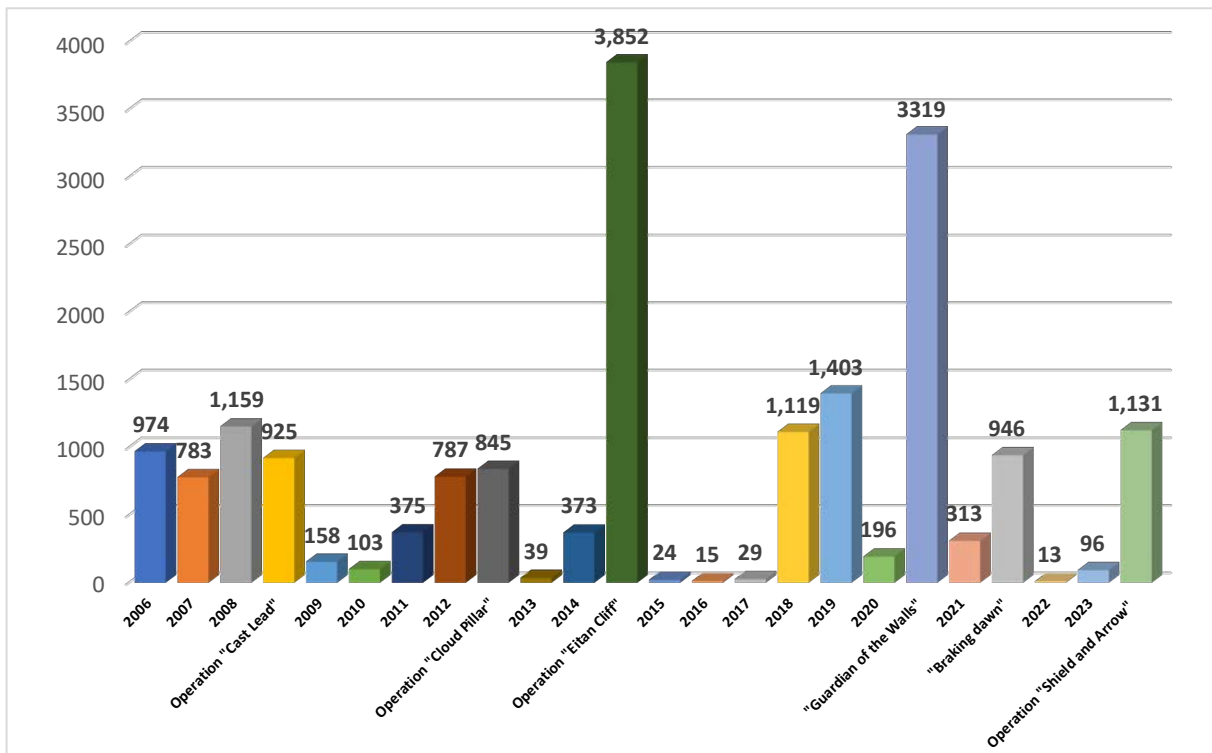
Rocket and mortar shell fire into Israel

► This past week no rocket or mortar shell hits were identified in Israeli territory.

Monthly Distribution of Rocket and Mortar Shell Fire since September 2021



Annual Distribution of Rocket Hits since 2006



Rockets launched towards the sea

► On July 20, 2023, the Palestinian social networks reported the launch of a rocket from the Gaza Strip towards the sea, part of "improving the resistance's rocket capabilities" (New Press Twitter account, July 20, 2023; Muhammad Hasouna's Facebook page, July 20, 2023). On July 25, 2023, more rockets were launched towards the sea as part of "developing resistance capabilities" (Shehab, July 25, 2023).



Rockets launched from the Gaza Strip towards the sea (Right: @YUALI79 Twitter account, July 20, 2023. Left: Shehab Twitter account, July 25, 2023).

Freedom Flotilla Coalition boat expected to attempt to reach the Gaza Strip in 2024

► According to the Freedom Flotilla Coalition to Lift the Blockade of the Gaza Strip (FFC), the coalition's Norwegian ship Handala is not expected to sail to Gaza before 2024. According to Roger Fowler, the coordinator of the New Zealand organization Kia Ora Gaza, an FFC member, this year the ship will sail between European ports to enlist support before leaving for the Gaza Strip in 2024 (Palestine Chronicle website, July 22, 2023). According to the FFC website, the ship currently sailing around Europe will try to break the naval "blockade" of Gaza in 2024 (FFC website, July 24, 2023).



From a video showing the route of the Handala from one European port to another, leaving from and returning to Oslo (Ship to Gaza-Sweden Facebook page, July 17, 2023).

Developments in the Gaza Strip

Distribution of the funds from Qatar

► **Mohammed al-Emadi, chairman of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza**, said the Committee, in cooperation with the Qatar Development Fund, had begun distributing the funds to needy families in the Gaza Strip. He said \$100 was given to each of one hundred thousand needy families. Payment was made by the UN through more than 300 distribution centers in the Gaza Strip (the website of Qatar's National Committee for the Reconstruction of Gaza, July 20, 2023).

The Palestinian Authority (PA)

Mahmoud Abbas visits Turkey

► July 24, 2023, Mahmoud Abbas arrived in Ankara at the invitation of Turkish President Erdogan. He headed a delegation of the Palestinian leadership which included Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki; Majed Faraj, head of Palestinian general intelligence; Majdi al-Khaldi, Mahmoud Abbas' advisor for diplomatic affairs; Mahmoud al-Habash, the head Qadi and Mahmoud Abbas' advisor for religious affairs and Islamic relations; and Muhammad Mustafa, a member of the PLO's Executive Committee. Mahmoud Abbas is expected to meet with the Turkish president and other government officials (Wafa , July 24, 2023).



Mahmoud Abbas lands in Ankara (website of the Turkish Daily Sabah in Arabic, July 24, 2023).

Preparations for the summit meeting of the Palestinian terrorist organization's leadership in Cairo

► This past week preparations continued for the summit meeting in Cairo of the senior figures of the Palestinian organizations, which was announced by Mahmoud Abbas. On July 23, 2023, the heads of the organizations met simultaneously in the Gaza Strip and Ramallah. Senior Hamas figures **Yahya al-Sinwar, head of the Hamas political bureau in the Gaza Strip, and Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, confirmed Hamas' participation in the meeting. However, senior PIJ figures, headed by **Ziyad al-Nakhalah, the organization's secretary general**, conditioned their participation on the release of all operatives detained by PA security forces and detained in PA prisons (Filastin al-Yawm, July 23, 2023).

► **Khalil al-Haya, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said the organization would make efforts for the meeting's success because it was a great opportunity for unity. He said they had to be united to support the people's "resistance," adding they had the strength and means to face the Israeli government. He said Israel was currently being torn apart from within, was bogged down in struggles and becoming isolated, and they were monitoring the developments. He stressed that the Palestinians now had an opportunity to isolate Israel and exert pressure on it, and the opportunity to confront and "resist" the occupation, but they had to be united (Shehab, July 23, 2023).



The "national conference" in the Gaza Strip (Shehab, July 23, 2023).

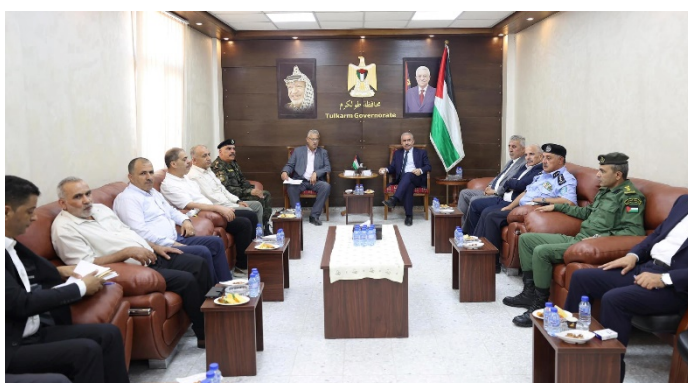
- ▶ **Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau**, praised the organizations' preparatory meeting which, he said, expressed their internal and external leaderships' collective desire and reflected the need to formulate a comprehensive national plan to confront the Israeli government. He said the meeting in Cairo would be held in the shadow of "existential challenges" and had to promote a new phase of national strategy based on comprehensive "resistance" and a change in the rules of "political conduct" towards Israel (Hamas website, July 23, 2023). **Haroun Nasser Al-Din, a member of Hamas' political bureau**, said that at the conference Hamas would act to promote four key issues, the first of which was ending administrative detentions and the persecution of "activists" in Judea and Samaria (Shehab, July 25, 2023).
- ▶ The delegation of **the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)**, headed by **Deputy Secretary General Jamil Muzaher**, met with **Abbas Kamal, head of Egyptian General Intelligence**. The delegation briefed him on the organization's position regarding developments in the Palestinian arena, requirements for the success of the upcoming meeting in Egypt, and the importance of ending the internal Palestinian schism and restoring Palestinian national unity. The members of the delegation expressed their appreciation for Egypt's efforts and support for the Palestinians and their rights. Kamel briefed the delegation on Egypt's positions and the steps it was taking to ease the Palestinians' hardships. He also said Egypt was working for the success of the upcoming meeting (PFLP website, July 22, 2023).



The PFLP delegation meets with the head of Egyptian General Intelligence (PFLP website, July 22, 2023).

The PA continues efforts to demonstrate governance⁴

► Muhammad Shtayyeh visited the Tulkarm district accompanied by Assam Abu Bakr, the district governor. While there, he launched several projects worth \$35 million, among them a power plant to increase the supply of electricity, a water reservoir, a clinic and a new paved road. He also met with the heads of the Palestinian security forces in the district (Wafa, July 22, 2023). Apparently the visit was part of the PA's efforts to demonstrate governance and a presence on the ground.

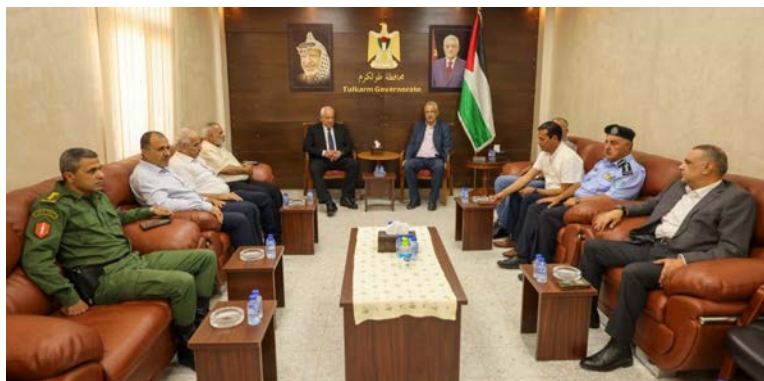


Right: Muhammad Shtayyeh launches a power plant. Left: Muhammad Shtayyeh meets with the heads of the Palestinian security forces (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, July 22, 2023).

► **Ziad al-Reeh, the PA minister of the interior**, recently toured the districts of Hebron, Jenin, Tubas, Nablus, Qalqilya, Tulkarm and Salfit, meeting with the district governors, the commanders of the security forces and the secretaries of Fatah branches. His stated objective was to learn about the security forces' activities and needs, and to emphasize support for them. He said the ministry and the security establishment would work strenuously to enforce law and order, and emphasized the directives of Mahmoud Abbas and the Palestinian

⁴ For further information see the July 23, 2023, report, "The Palestinian Authority attempts to restore its system of governance."

leadership to preserve the achievements of the Palestinian national plan and prevent attempts to damage the government's efforts to complete and protect the construction of state institutions (PA ministry of the interior Facebook page, July 18, 2023).



The PA minister of the interior visits the Tulkarm (right) and the Salfit districts (left) (PA ministry of the interior Facebook page, July 18, 2023).

► The al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades (AAMB) Tulkarm Battalion – Rapid Response Squads called on the PA's security forces to release all political detainees in general and AAMB operatives in particular. They also warned that attacking and persecuting AAMB operatives would no longer be met with inactivity and silence (Tulkarm Battalion – Rapid Response Squads Telegram channel, July 24, 2023).

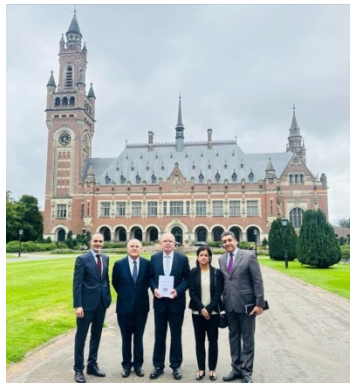
Palestinian activity in international courts

► **Omar Abdallah, aide to the PA foreign minister for UN agencies**, said the International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC) was expected to launch a website which Palestinians could use to file complaints against Israeli "war criminals." **Shawan Jabarin, director of the al-Haq Institution**, called on Palestinians to submit documents and complaints to the court regarding actions the Israeli security forces had [allegedly] taken against them. He said the messages and complaints submitted through the website to the ICC were intended to put greater pressure on the chief prosecutor's office and force him to address Palestinian complaints on a regular basis. If the ICC did not address the Palestinians' complaints, they would demand the immediate closure of the chief prosecutor's office (Wafa, July 18, 2023). Muhammad al-Shalalkeh, PA minister of justice, called on Palestinian residents and organizations to submit complaints and documents regarding "Israel's crimes" through the ICC website (Wafa, July 19, 2023).

► A Palestinian delegation led by Palestinian foreign minister Riyad al-Maliki met with Philippe Gauthier, the registrar of the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Al-Maliki gave him a written

declaration regarding the UN's request to draft an advisory opinion on the nature of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, the legal consequences arising from that occupation, and the obligations of the states and the UN. Al-Maliki emphasized that submitting the statement was part of the diplomatic and legal process they were undertaking to protect the rights of the Palestinians from the "crimes committed by Israel" until the Israeli "war criminals" were prosecuted and their immunity revoked.

► He added that the statement presented irrefutable evidence and facts regarding the illegal policies and measures taken by Israel and the decades-long suffering of the Palestinians. He expressed his appreciation for the countries that had submitted and would submit their arguments, and thanked them for their involvement in working with the ICJ to provide a legal opinion (Wafa, July 24, 2023).



Riyad al-Maliki holding the declaration (Wafa, July 24, 2023).

► On February 9, 2023, the PA foreign ministry received an official letter from the ICJ after an ad hoc meeting held by its judges to examine the "essence of the occupation." According to the letter, **July 25, 2023 was the deadline for the transmission of written statements by the various countries, UN and PA, and for the submission of all information and documents relating to the issue in accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution of December 30, 2022**, requesting a legal opinion from the ICJ regarding the legality of the Israeli occupation of Judea, Samaria and Jerusalem [sic]. It was also noted that October 25, 2023 was the deadline for submitting responses and comments regarding the petitions which would be submitted to the court (PA foreign ministry Facebook page, February 9, 2023).

The Portuguese Parliament recognizes the nakba

- ▶ The Portuguese Parliament passed a resolution recognizing the nakba⁵ and praising the struggle of the Palestinians to achieve the right of self-determination [sic]. The resolution also condemned Israel's policy and its [alleged] illegal annexation, which violated international laws, and called on the Portuguese government to take an explicit position to protect the rights of the Palestinians as guaranteed by international norms and laws (al-Quds in English, July 21, 2023).
- ▶ The Palestinians praised Portugal's decision as a step towards recognizing Palestinian rights:
- ▶ **Muhammad Shtayyeh** called the decision the first step towards the Portuguese government's recognition of the state of "Palestine" (Wafa, July 24, 2023).
- ▶ **Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee**, called on all European countries to recognize the state of "Palestine" with the June 4, 1967 borders in order to defend the two-state solution against the Israeli government's policies, which had effectively killed the two-state solution (Hussein al-Sheikh's Twitter account, July 22, 2023).
- ▶ **Bassem Na'im, a member of the Hamas leadership in the Gaza Strip**, called Portuguese recognition of the nakba a new victory for the Palestinians, which joined similar decisions made by other European parliaments. He also stated they expected the governments of those countries to implement the policies and take the steps necessary to support the Palestinians' right to end the occupation and achieve freedom and independence (Hamas website, July 22, 2023).

Continued actions for economic disengagement from Israel

- ▶ On July 18, 2023, **PA Prime Minister Muhammad Shtayyeh participated** in the opening ceremony of the Palestine Food Fair in Bethlehem. He said strengthening the Palestinian national product was in accordance with the PA government's strategy of disengaging from Israel, increasing Palestinian consumer trust in Palestinian products and creating jobs and income for Palestinians. He reiterated that the Palestinian national product was part of the concept of "resistance" (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, July 18, 2023). Regarding Palestinian banks, he pointed out that they were currently working "at a very good pace" so no

⁵ The abandoning, fleeing or expulsion of Arabs during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, turning them into refugees.

restrictions applied to them, and in 2022 the Palestinian economy had grown by 3.6% (Wafa, July 18, 2023).



Muhammad Shtayyeh opens the Palestinian Food Fair for 2023 in Bethlehem (Muhammad Shtayyeh's Facebook page, July 18, 2023).

Appendix

Rocks, Molotov cocktails and other attacks

► **In Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem Palestinians continued throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at Israeli vehicles driving on the roads.** The more prominent events were the following:⁶

► **July 25, 2023:** A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Zif Junction (south of Hebron). The driver escaped after the car caught fire. No casualties were reported. The vehicle burned to the ground.



The vehicle on fire at the Zif Junction (Shehab Twitter account, July 24, 2023).

- ◆ **July 24, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near the Ma'aleh Lavona Junction (north of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **July 24, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near al-Aroub (north of Hebron). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **July 22, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near al-Khader (west of Bethlehem). Two days previously Rocks were thrown at the same site. No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **July 22, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Hawwara (south of Nablus). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.
- ◆ **July 20, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Qadumim (east of Qalqilya). No casualties or damage were reported.
- ◆ **July 18, 2023:** Molotov cocktails and rocks were thrown at Israeli vehicles at the entrance to al-Aroub (north of Hebron). No casualties or damage were reported.

⁶ Information and pictures from Rescue Without Borders in Judea and Samaria unless otherwise noted.

- ◆ **July 18, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli minibus near Turmus Aya (northeast of Ramallah). No casualties were reported; the minibus was damaged.
- ◆ **July 18, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle between the Te'enim Crossing and the Avnei Hefetz traffic circle (southwest of Tulkarm. No casualties were reported; vehicles were damaged.
- ◆ **July 18, 2023:** Rocks were thrown at an Israeli vehicle near Dir Istiya (northwest of Salfit). No casualties were reported; the vehicle was damaged.